



Volunteer View

(A newsletter for IDNR State Park and Reservoirs Volunteers who have dedicated 50 + hours and are still active. Thank You!)

Winter 2013

Winter Fun, Come and Join!

By Fred Wooley, Interpretive Naturalist,
Pokagon State Park

The Third Annual Angola Area Chamber of Commerce-Pokagon Corporate Toboggan Speed Challenge occurred December 6. About 30 businesses and local organizations fielded teams.

(Photo right) Nearly 120 tobogganers and several dozen spectators enjoyed the spirited competition. The best dressed award went to the Cameron Memorial Community Hospital Crash Test Dummies. The Potawatomi Inn Ninja Turtles captured the most entertaining team award. For the fastest team award, it was a three-peat for Strebog Construction, winning for the third consecutive year, flying down the track with the records speed of 41mph! The park's Potawatomi Inn catered a post challenge chili and hotdog dinner. Many thanks to the Trine University Students who helped haul toboggans and all employees and volunteers who worked a little extra so all could enjoy great winter fun!



To capture all the fun, the Steuben County Tourism Bureau has purchased a replacement camera valued at \$1,500 for the wireless Toboggan Camera. The camera is mounted on the toboggan tower and gives an aerial perspective of toboggans going down the track. You see the back of toboggans as they leave the tower on the 1/4 mile run. We had one last year that couldn't get the job done, the new camera is up and running. Check it out at www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/7529.htm.

For the hours and all the toboggan information visit www.tobogganrun.com. It closes the last Sunday in February, February 24! So come join the fun soon. If you can't make it take a virtual toboggan ride with me at the tobogganrun.com website!

Wow! We are Grateful!!

By Brandt Baughman, Property Manager, Indiana Dunes State Park, bbaughman@dnr.IN.gov

The Friends of Indiana Dunes State Park had a very good year financially. Their Vanguard investment alone gained over \$27K in interest. With that wonderful news, the president, Zella Olson, contacted our naturalist, stating that they need us to spend \$5K right away. So, the naturalist, assistant property manager and I discussed a few options and presented them to the group.

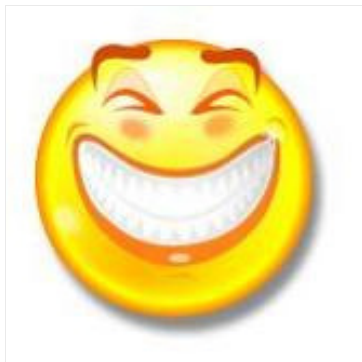
To summarize, we told the board that what we really, really need is another sand wheelchair, but they cost over \$13K. However, what we really need is another ATV, but they cost over \$6K. So if neither of those were palatable, we would like to buy \$5K worth of trees, recycling bins and possibly a set of mounted binoculars for the new Bird Observation Platform.

Well, they voted and approved...all of it! And threw in an extra ATV to boot!

We are going to wait until 2014 to buy recycling bins, trees and binoculars, but we are moving forward with providing them our desired model of sand chair and (2) ATVs. This will be about a \$26K purchase and we are very grateful!

Overall it was a pretty good meeting. And it turns out, we don't even have to access Workmen's Comp for stitches in Doug's (assistant property manager) chin after his jaw hit the table!

Thank you so much Friends of Indiana Dunes State Park!!!



A New Tradition Started!

By Vicki Basman, Chief of Interpretation , State Parks and Reservoirs

Hats off to all the park and reservoir properties that hosted First Day Hikes yesterday! Many of you sent in photos, descriptions of hikes, and things you saw on the way. This was a very successful event, and almost every property had hikers claim they wanted to do this again next year. Some highlights:

Total number of properties that participated: 20

Total number of hikers: 581

Total number of miles hiked: 968.5

Biggest attendance:

Chain O' Lakes with 70 hikers!

Fort Harrison (2PM hike) with 68 hikers and 5 dogs (see below photo)

Pokagon: 65 hikers

Prophetstown afternoon hike: 52 hikers (Prophetstown offered two hikes, 12 in the morning and 52 in the afternoon)

I logged all the statistics into the National Association of State Park Director's (NASPD) data base. I put in your number of hikers, miles walked, and any interesting items you had sent me (dogs on hikes, birds/wildlife seen on the way, interesting people on hikes, etc.). I also included many of your photos.

I was pleased to see that NASPD "grabbed" one Indiana item they thought was interesting enough to include in their story. It may not have been our largest hike, or the longest, but it apparently was of interest. You will see why, when you read the article and find the Indiana "tid-bit". Check out:

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/1/prweb10290494.htm>

Again, thank you to everyone who participated and helped. We look forward to offering these unique-to-state-park hikes again next year on January 1, with more properties participating, and hopefully we will log in over 1,000 miles hiked. Start planning now! What a great way to start off the new year.



Busy Holiday Season

By Brad Gilley, Interpretive Manager, Spring Mill State Park



Above, candle dipping demonstration

Spring Mill's Holiday in the Village was held on December 7-8. The event went fantastically. We ended up having approximately 2000 park visitors, and between concessions, gate fees, and the Mercantile, generated over \$3400.00 in revenue. We did this with five paid park staff and over 600 hours of volunteer efforts. The volunteers are the ones who portrayed pioneers, provided music in the mill, served refreshments in the Tavern, and portrayed Father Christmas for the public's enjoyment. All this hap-

pened in the rain. If properties can find a niche for a holiday program it's a great way to get people out to the park at a time when visitation is low.

Holidays are for the Birds!

Mounds State Park hosted its annual Holidays are for the Birds event. Visitors make a variety of items to hang or put outside for the birds and other animals. Several stations are set up in the multi-purpose room. The public and volunteers look forward to this event. The event is successful thanks to the help of many dedicated volunteers. Eleven were able to help out this year. THANK YOU!



Tippecanoe River State Park 2012 Year in Review

Partnership Report.

By Jason Hickman, Assistant Property Manager, Tippecanoe River State Park

Tippecanoe River State Park (TRSP) benefited from an abundance of community support in the year 2012. The first influx of energy to the volunteer program began in February as park staff and Director of Stewardship Ginger Murphy held a meeting to begin forming the Friends of Tippecanoe River State Park. This first meeting drew a crowd of over 80 people. During this meeting we gained information on persons interested in donating time and money for various projects throughout the property.

TRSP held a volunteer day in May and had an outstanding amount of support. Over 50 people donated 225 hours of time cleaning the nature center and laying the foundation for 2 manure pits in the horse campground. This was the first time in long time that the nature center received this amount of cleaning. Every item was removed and scrubbed, new paint added to displays and other work was completed. Early in June Members of the Indiana Trail Riders donated time cleaning trails.

TRSP and Friends of TRSP helped celebrate the Halloween weekend on the property by opening the nature center and having crafts, events and other programs going on throughout the day. It was estimated that 200-300 persons were in attendance. TRSP and Friends of TRSP held the first ever Christmas in the Park in December. It celebrated the holiday season with fires in the fire place, pictures with Santa and Smokey, cookies and punch, and holiday crafts. It was an estimated 200 persons attended the event.

Other Highlights

- ▶ 3 Community Service workers donated 141.5 hours of time.
- ▶ Volunteer GPS Tippecanoe River trails and submitted to Outdoor Recreation for updated trail maps.
- ▶ Volunteer Donated time to paint employee break room.
- ▶ New employee was hired to become full time/part time DOC coordinator.
- ▶ 5 employees attended DOC training at Westville.
- ▶ Offender crew has made an immediate impact on wood cleanup around the service area.
- ▶ Norman Saul donated \$250 dollars worth of Bird Boxes.
- ▶ Johnny Nevada and the Rockets donated time to play a summer concert. (\$800)
- ▶ Hoosier River Watch Tippecanoe River State Park was started.
- ▶ Kim Hoover donated time for several wildlife rehabilitation programs.
- ▶ Steve Russell donated several nights to have stargazing program.
- ▶ 162 Volunteers Donated 2,553 hours of Volunteer Time in the Year 2012.
- ▶ Volunteers built Leopold Benches and sold as a fundraiser for Friends Group.

What a great year! Thanks to everyone!

A Heritage Kitchen Garden: Our Only Living Link to the Past

This article is compiled from the research and writings of Cathy Trost-Steffan, Peggy Foster, Barbara Cummings and others

Volunteers at Turkey Run State Park are no strangers to hard work. They complete many projects that staff either can't get to or need help with. They get down and they get dirty. And in no place at Turkey Run is that more literally true than at the Salmon Lusk Home kitchen garden.

For perhaps as many as 31 years volunteers at Turkey Run have created a kitchen garden. The garden is designed, as kitchen gardens in this area used to be, to produce vegetables, small fruits and medicinal and culinary herbs needed by early settlers, providing a variety of foods to supplement the staple crops such as corn and potatoes grown in large fields nearby. The vegetables and fruits from the kitchen garden not only supplied daily meals during the growing season, but were also preserved or stored in a dry cellar to sustain the family throughout the winter.

The overall design of the Lusk kitchen garden dates back to the monastic gardens of old Europe, which placed squares inside of squares to make the best use of space and increase yield. For practical reasons, this geometric pattern survived in the 19th century kitchen gardens during a time when lawns and flower beds were following a more flowing style. And just like northern Indiana gardens of the 1800s, ours is fenced with closely spaced pickets to exclude plant-eating varmints. The old moldboard plows couldn't reach the edges of the garden because of the fence, so the garden edges (ours included) were usually planted with perennials. (Photo at right)



Although originally designed by DNR's Div. of Engineering, the current Lusk kitchen garden is the re-

sult of years of volunteer effort. Intensive research by volunteers has provided parameters to keep the garden true to 1850 or earlier, to the northern patterns of seed flow across the country (no okra in this garden!), to the styles of trellises used in this part of the country. Only 19th century techniques, such as selective seed saving, interplanting, and crop rotation are used to repel garden pests and diseases. Good old horse manure is the fertilizer of choice. Our few concessions to the 21st century include the use of a tiller to break up the beds in spring, the use of hose and sprinkler for summer watering, and the use of chipped mulch instead of straw to harden paths between plant beds. We want the visitor experience at this garden to be a true look at 19th century Turkey Run. They can see *and sample* familiar plants, but ones in their original, un-hybridized forms. And that truth is delicious!

Our volunteers have a deep love for our historic past. From Salmon and then John Lusk, early conservationists who maintained this land until it became a state park, to Juliet Strauss and Richard Lieber, founding people of our state park system, Turkey Run's story is one of lasting beginnings and far-sighted conservationism, an example of how a few dedicated people can change the face of the Indiana landscape forever. Our volunteers not only embrace this vision, but they model it for our visitors.

We spend a lot of time at all of our State Parks telling these wonderful stories to our visitors, trying to make the cultural past that's unique to each property real for them. We do reenactments. We do historic interpretation. We restore and provide tours of historic structures. We create exhibits. But it has finally dawned on me that the only way history is truly alive in the present day is in the garden. Through the people who have wisely hung on to those early varieties of plants, replanting heirloom seeds year after year, we can literally grow – and *eat!* – history. And thanks to hundreds of dedicated volunteers over the years, we are doing that very thing at Turkey Run State Park!

HELP WANTED! Volunteers Needed

Chain O' Lakes State Park

April 20 & 21-Indiana Trail 100- This is a 100 mile ultra-marathon (the first and only in the state) taking place in the park, and the race coordinators are looking for volunteers to help on race days. Anyone interested should visit the race website, www.indianatrail100.com, and click on the Volunteer tab. It will be a unique, fun event! All of the proceeds go to the park, so volunteers will be contributing in more ways than one.

May 4-Aldo Leopold Bench Building Workshop-Park patrons can purchase a custom Leopold Bench kit and we will help them put their benches together during the workshop. Volunteers will likely be carrying boards of lumber and assisting with tools. This is a great program for people who enjoy working with their hands. Program times and location are to be announced. Please contact the park's Interpretive Naturalist for details, chaininterp@dnr.in.gov or (260) 636-2654

Starve Hollow SRA could use volunteers to help with Scouts Outdoors on March 23. We do different activities to help Scouts earn some of their outdoor/forestry badges.

April 27 is Arbor day/earth day here. We could use help with information setup, demonstrations on composting, reuse crafts, etc.

We are also looking for individuals who have wood carving skills or chainsaw carving skills to set up a demonstration for different times during the year.

Contact Sandy Derringer sderringer@dnr.in.gov or call Jackson-Washington office 812-358-2160.

State Parks and Reservoirs Friends Groups are always looking for energetic individuals. Visit the website www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2442.htm to find a Friends Group near you.

Upper Wabash Interpretive Services (Salamonie and Mississinewa Reservoirs, Ouabache State Park and J. Edward Roush Fish & Wildlife Area)- Volunteers are needed for several upcoming events:

February 2 and 3- Eagle Watch Evening Field Trip; February 23 - Cowboy Gathering; March 1- Indiana Master Naturalist Class, May 4 - Reservoir Roots Slide Show.

Of course, we are searching for additional attendees for our IMN workshop too. Spring School Group season will be starting. Love to fish? Help with our fishing derbies. All training and materials provided. Salamonie Interpretive is looking for administrative volunteers to help take care of our facility. We are interested in greeters, people who would like to do behind the scenes work like making copies and working on the computer, or light to medium cleaning.

View program information at www.dnr.in.gov/uwis or contact Teresa Rody at 260-468-2127 or email trody@dnr.in.gov to get more information.

**Check out the State Park and Reservoir special events calendar
for more events to help with or to attend!
<http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/3282.htm>**

Friends of Harmonie State Park had a great volunteer experience with our stage. Almost all the work was volunteer labor. We had a couple guys that were the leaders that knew what they were doing – they led the charge for the build! (photo below) We have several projects coming up in this time period. No specific dates have been set for these.

- ▶ We will continue our playground work – finishing up the edging around the playgrounds.
- ▶ We hope to complete our tree cookie project.
- ▶ Maybe build fire pits near our new stage.
- ▶ Trail work.



You can also check out our facebook page, that is the first place news gets posted and would get to you immediately. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Harmonie-State-Park/237236413004072?cropsuccess> or our website to see what else we are up to www.friendsofharmonie.org/

Article and photos submitted by Ed Knapp,
president of the Friends of Harmonie State Park.



DNR

The mission of Indiana's State Parks and Reservoirs is to manage and interpret our properties' unique natural, wildlife and cultural resources using principles of multiple use and preservation, while sustaining the integrity of these resources for current and future generations.

